

Examining Study Abroad Participation in I-Promise Students: Preliminary Study on Why Minority Students Don't Study Abroad

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Abstract

Overall, study abroad participation rates have steadily increased across higher education institutions, however, the majority of the participating population is persistently Caucasian females. This project seeks to understand how Illinois Promise (I-Promise) students' decision against studying abroad is influenced by their race or socioeconomic status. Illinois Promise is a scholarship awarded to students considered to be the most disadvantaged in society. Despite I-Promise's transferability of financial aid, not many I-Promise students are studying abroad. This qualitative study will survey I-Promise students and then purposefully sample minority (African-American, Native-American, Latino, and Asian-American) students for in-person interviews. Implications for this study include gaining insight on the social influences that might exist in a minority student's decision to study abroad. As the gap in minority participation in study abroad continues to widen, it is hoped that this study will increase understanding of why racial disparities exist in study abroad participation. Higher education policy may benefit from understanding this and ultimately contribute to the increase in minority participation in study abroad programs.